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Training Manual
(TRAMAN)

Navy Customer Service Manual

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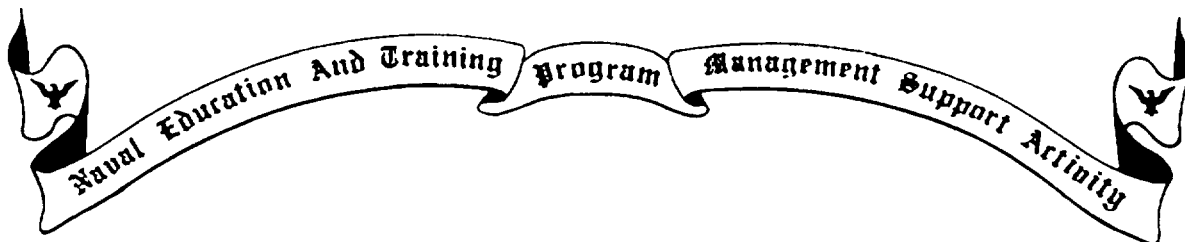


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Although the words “he,” “him,” and “his” are used sparingly in this manual to enhance communication, they are not intended to be gender driven nor to affront or discriminate against anyone reading this text.

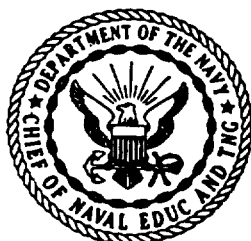
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NAVY CUSTOMER SERVICE MANUAL

NAVEDTRA 12972



*1993 Edition Prepared by
AMHC(AW) Edward L. Prater*

PREFACE

“We must take every opportunity to motivate the personnel who man the contact points, whether civilian or military, to take pride in the caliber of service they provide their shipmates. The motivation of our civilian personnel in these positions provides a special challenge. We must ensure that they understand that they are part of a people oriented team, that they are an important part of our Navy, and that the positions they hold at the contact points are positions of special trust which support our most important resources-our Navy men and women.”

... VADM C.K. Duncan
Former Chief of Naval Personnel

This training manual has been developed in response to the above charge. Its purpose is to make you aware of the importance of proper attitude and its effect on everyday performance and, thereby, to convince you that a continuing effort to develop positive attitudes in interpersonal relationships is worthwhile.

This TRAMAN and its associated NRTC were prepared by the Naval Education and Training Program Management Support Activity, Pensacola, Florida, for the Chief of Naval Education and Training.

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THE UNITED STATES NAVY

GUARDIAN OF OUR COUNTRY

The United States Navy is responsible for maintaining control of the sea and is a ready force on watch at home and overseas, capable of strong action to preserve the peace or of instant offensive action to win in war.

It is upon the maintenance of this control that our country's glorious future depends; the United States Navy exists to make it so.

WE SERVE WITH HONOR

Tradition, valor, and victory are the Navy's heritage from the past. To these may be added dedication, discipline, and vigilance as the watchwords of the present and the future.

At home or on distant stations as we serve with pride, confident in the respect of our country, our shipmates, and our families.

Our responsibilities sober us; our adversities strengthen us.

Service to God and Country is our special privilege. We serve with honor.

THE FUTURE OF THE NAVY

The Navy will always employ new weapons, new techniques, and greater power to protect and defend the United States on the sea, under the sea, and in the air.

Now and in the future, control of the sea gives the United States her greatest advantage for the maintenance of peace and for victory in war.

Mobility, surprise, dispersal, and offensive power are the keynotes of the new Navy. The roots of the Navy lie in a strong belief in the future, in continued dedication to our tasks, and in reflection on our heritage from the past.

Never have our opportunities and our responsibilities been greater.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1. Face to Face Contact	1-1
2. Navy Customers and their Needs	2-1
3. Manning the Contact Point	3-1
4. The Team Approach	4-1
APPENDIX	
I. References Used to Develop the Traman	AI- 1
INDEX	INDEX-1

CHAPTER 1

FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- *Discuss the value of face-to-face contact in customer service.*
 - *Define the terms “customer” “contact point,” “skills,” and “attitude” as they relate to personal interaction.*
 - *Determine the correct approach in using the Navy Customer Service Manual.*
-

Have you ever waited in line only to be told, when you finally reached the window, “Come back tomorrow; the person responsible for that isn’t here”? When trying to get a question answered, have you ever had the feeling that the person you were talking to resented being bothered? Have you ever had to resubmit a request because the original was lost?

Are you convinced that there are good reasons (not excuses) for any of the above situations? The Chief of Naval Operations is not, and a great many others in the Navy are not.

Only a wishful dreamer would expect all Navy members to be dedicated 100 percent to their work, but only a confirmed pessimist would declare that the Navy is as good as it could be.

There must be a point between these two extremes at which those who provide services can handle problems and requests correctly, promptly, and courteously. In other words, there must be a point at which contact point representatives can efficiently satisfy the needs of customers.

Everyone in the Navy is directly or indirectly responsible for providing efficient customer service. However, of the many ratings in the Navy, only a few provide direct services to other personnel. These include the AK, DK, DT, HM, LI, LN, MS, NC, PC, PN, RP, SH, SK, and YN ratings. Although the principles given in this manual are intended mainly for personnel in these ratings, those in other ratings can certainly benefit. They

can apply these principles daily on and off the job during face-to-face contact with other personnel.

PROVIDING SERVICE

Think back to some recent contact you have had with one or more of the personal service ratings. How would you rate the service you received? If you are a member of one of the personal service ratings or perform service-type duties, how do you think your service would be rated by those you serve?

Now, let’s go one step further. What effect did this good or bad service have on the person served? How do you respond to courteous treatment or efficient action? Or viewing it from the opposite side, how do you respond to a don’t care attitude or bad service?

Although you can’t always provide customers with everything they may request, you can always give them good service. People may request things or services for which they aren’t entitled or to which you haven’t the authority to grant. In such cases *service* refers to the quality of your service rather than whether or not you have complied with all of a person’s wishes. The runaround, the fast shuffle, or a don’t-bother-me response given to an individual needing service indicates one of the following attitudes:

The customer isn’t important.

The customer’s request or problem isn’t important.

The customer doesn’t know what he is talking about.

The customer doesn't know what he is talking about.
I have more important things to do.

Many of the people entering the Navy do not have a clear idea of what *Navy life* is really like. Their perceptions have been influenced by friends, parents, movies, books, and TV; a sense of responsibility to their country (patriotism); the glamour of the uniform and tradition; the opportunity to travel; and the desire to make it on their own. They have all been screened and generally are the type of people the Navy wants—intelligent, healthy, and motivated. In general, they have a lot to learn and a need for a lot of maturing. Although their development may require a lot of hard work, they possess a high potential for becoming valuable Navy members. They will become members who value their role and status in the Navy and value the contributions they can make to the Navy and their country.

If these people are generally intelligent and motivated, then why the attitude change during their first term of enlistment? What happens during the first 4 years to make them count the days until they will get out? Part of the reason is the demands placed on the Navy member. A special person is needed to handle those demands, and the person who is unable to handle them could never be happy making a career of the Navy. Even so, some members have left the Navy who might have stayed in had they not faced frustrations and disappointments during their first enlistment. Everyone has inconveniences and disappointments to contend with, and everyone expects them. But what people do not expect and should not have to contend with is a lack of service—service that would enable them to cope with everyday demands. Better human relations will not eliminate their inconveniences or disappointments, but can prevent the frustrations resulting from inadequate service.

The effect of bad service is much more lasting than the momentary anger or disgust felt by the recipients of that service. Frustration and resentment resulting from bad service often develop into a negative attitude toward the Navy. On the other hand, good service builds a good attitude in customers. Good service is an indication of capable, knowledgeable, and interested workers and a naval service that cares about its members.

Naval personnel have special needs resulting from away of life that is quite different from that of civilians.

A civilian may:

seek employment in any occupation;

seek employment at any location;

negotiate the amount of pay to be received;

refuse a job or quit a job if that seems to be the best career option;

choose the amount, the type, and the location of training or education best suited to his or her resources and capabilities;

work a 40-hour week;

lead a normal homelife;

accept a transfer only when it is convenient and financially beneficial

The Navy member must:

serve, not always in the rating of choice;

serve at any location to which ordered;

manage on the amount of pay prescribed by law;

perform assigned duties for the duration of the enlistment;

be willing to accept prescribed training to meet the needs of the Navy;

routinely work days, nights, weekends, and holidays;

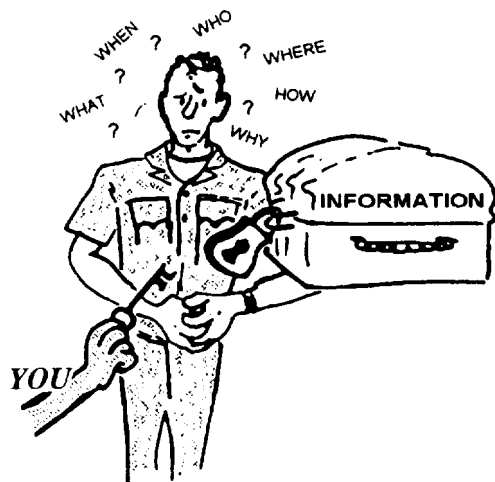
often experience long periods of separation from family;

often relocates the family at inconvenient times—causing a financial loss.

For the Navy to fulfill its mission, members often must sacrifice their freedom of choice to meet the needs of the Navy. They must depend upon the Navy to provide them with training and achievement opportunities as well as challenging and rewarding work experiences. They must also depend upon the Navy to meet their physical and psychological needs.

You will probably administer one or more of the medical, financial, educational, and recreational benefits and services the Navy provides its members and their dependents. These benefits and services range from paying costs imposed on members because of transfers to providing opportunities for personal improvement that they otherwise might not have. You must value the importance of these services to Navy members and their families. As a member of a service

rating, you are the all-important link between the member and these benefits and services.



For a civilian, several places may offer the same or a similar service. There is usually more than one grocery store, more than one barbershop, more than one service station, more than one laundry, and so forth. But, the situation is very different for the individual in the Navy. There is only one personnel office, one disbursing office, one ship's store, one division office, and so on.

While going through the mess line, you probably have heard someone criticize the meal only to be advised, "If you don't like our food, try the restaurant across the street." This advice might have been acceptable if a restaurant had been located across the street—but one wasn't. The person had only one choice: eat what was offered. Of course, not all criticism is valid; sometimes it is merely griping. But this example illustrates the point that most activities normally have only one place where members can go for a specific service. They do NOT have a choice.

Since the members do not have a choice, neither do you! Your service is not to be considered a favor. Rather, you are meeting your responsibility.

EFFECT OF GOOD/BAD SERVICE

The Navy is definitely affected, either directly or indirectly, by the service you provide to its members. Earlier, we said that bad service causes customers to develop an attitude of resentment. However, seldom do they restrict that attitude toward the person who gave the poor service. Instead, they soon generalize that attitude toward the whole Navy.

Machinery and equipment can be purchased when needed—conscientious, dedicated people cannot. Thus, it is apparent that capable *people are the Navy's most valuable asset*. As strange as it may seem, the Navy is constantly losing these assets—its capable petty officers. The choice to reenlist or leave the Navy is a personal matter, and the decision usually represents a carefully thought-out career plan. But, in some cases, a member's decision to leave the Navy has nothing to do with careful planning. Instead, the member's decision has resulted from frustration and dissatisfaction with the services the Navy has provided. In these cases, the Navy has lost not only the person but, the investment of expensive training.

You may ask, What can I do about it? My job isn't important! I only perform a personal service or provide for a personal need. THERE ARE NO UNIMPORTANT JOBS!

Few changes are made just for the sake of change. First, a need is recognized, and then new procedures are developed to meet that need. Recognizing a need is also the first step in making improvements in the area of a service. We must understand that even the best of services have room for improvement. With this in mind, everyone involved in providing service must recognize the constant need for improvement.

RECOGNITION OF NEEDS

Before discussing needs, let's first consider the people who have them. Everyone in the Navy has needs. The failure of these needs to be met quite often develops into problems that far exceed the original needs themselves. However, the level of service required to meet their needs and solve their problems varies. For example, experienced senior petty officers require less advice and fewer explanations and interpretations than the less experienced junior petty officers. Since the experienced members know more about the services to which they are entitled, they are less likely to accept poor service. Although all members depend on others for services, new enlistees, their dependents, and new civilian employees probably have the greatest need.

The need for improved services is apparent based on the comments Navy members make. Let's analyze members' desires and feelings as a first step in determining how improvements can be made:

- They want to be regarded as individuals.



- They feel that, as a person, they are worthy of more attention than that given in a mechanical and routine fashion.
- They want to be treated equally, fairly, and with concern for their welfare.
- They want to be able to rely on more experienced members for advice and proper action in their behalf.

Improved human relations is essential if customer service is to improve.

This manual shows how you can respond more helpfully to your shipmates by developing a greater sensitivity to their needs. This manual doesn't provide you with all the answers for interacting effectively with people. However, it does tell you how to deal with the various human relations you will face daily.

More than mechanical skills are involved when you are working with people. Your attitude doesn't affect a machine with which you are working, but it does affect people—they care how they are treated! Although your attitude might affect the quality of your work, it will have the greatest impact on the personnel receiving your service. Your manner, your speech, and the way you perform your job will influence the member's attitude toward you, toward your office, and toward the Navy.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TERMINOLOGY

Before going further, we will define four terms that are frequently used throughout this manual: customer,

contact point, skills, and attitude. By no means are these terms new, but for the sake of this instruction, we will define them.

CUSTOMER

First, let's consider the familiar term *customer*. In your role within the Navy, you are frequently a customer, although you might not think of yourself as one. If you are a member of the service ratings, you may also provide services to customers within the Navy? For the purposes of this manual, we will use the term *customer* to refer to anyone for whom a service is provided.

Some services offered to customers within the Navy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Food service
- Health service
- Resale activities
- Information service
- Advice and counseling

Although you may receive some of these services without purchasing them, you are still a customer.

The following are some specific instances in which a Navy member is a customer:

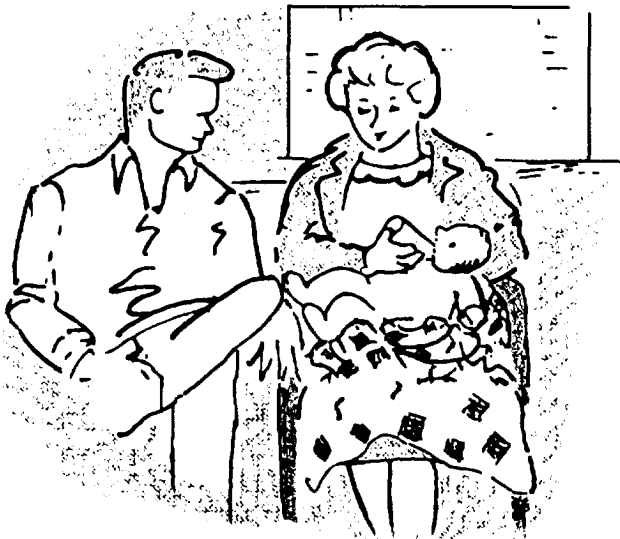
- Going through the dining facility serving line
- Making a claim for travel

- Going to sick call
- Obtaining information on educational opportunities
- Receiving dental assistance
- Being processed for reenlistment
- Mailing a package at the ship's post office
- Checking out a book in the library
- Submitting a leave request



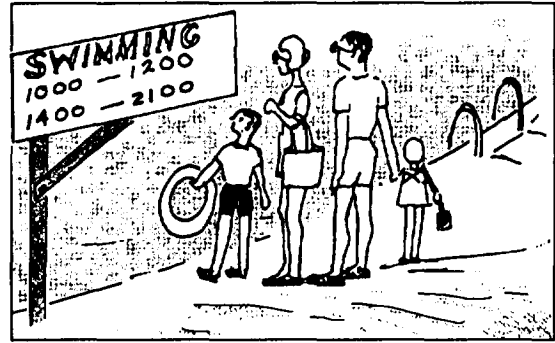
The following are some instances in which dependents are customers:

- Receiving medical care



- Arranging for shipment of personal property
- Shopping in the Navy Exchange
- Attending the theater

- Using the swimming pool



The list could go on and on, but these examples show that everyone may be a customer several times a day. Other terms may be interchanged with the term *customer*. *Client*, for example, refers to anyone for whom a service requiring some degree of confidentiality is provided. *Patient* usually refers to someone for whom a health service is provided. The term *customer* merely refers to a person for whom a general service is provided.

CONTACT POINT

Contact point is, very simply, the physical location to which a customer goes to obtain a service. Some examples of contact points are as follows:

- Sick bay
- Dining facility
- Post office
- Ship's store
- Legal service office
- Ship's office
- Personnel office
- Disbursing office

These points are manned by the persons who provide direct services to customers. Indirect services provided by other ratings pertain more to the operation of the ship or activity and are not necessarily performed at a contact point. The following are examples:

- The MM or FN operating the evaporators to provide fresh water
- The BM or SN who keeps the liberty boat in operational condition

- The YN who types and prints the plan of the day
- The AK or AN who procures parts and supplies for operational commitments

Ships and activities have various contact points. The size of the command, number of personnel assigned, and the scope of service provided are factors that determine how many contact points are needed. These contact points are where you, your dependents, your seniors, and your subordinates go to obtain services, advice, and answers to questions. They are important because the services they provide are important. However, the quality of those services is determined by the persons providing them—YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE PERSONS.



Because “contact point representative” is a rather long title, the word *you* is used in this manual when referring to the person manning the contact point. Therefore, *you* may refer to the reader or to the contact point representative.

SKILLS

Skill is the ability to do something well as the result of talent, training, or practice, or a combination of these. A multitude of skills come into play in your day-to-day activities—military, professional, and athletic skills, just to mention a few.

We are concerned here with face-to-face, or interpersonal, skills. These are the skills that enable you to interact effectively with people. Basically, these skills include the ability to listen to, work with, and speak to an individual as a PERSON and NOT as an inanimate object.

The structure of the Navy tends to foster an impersonal attitude in its members. We never see the people who make most of the decisions that affect our

lives—type of duty, permanent change of station, and entitlement for medical. Our relationship with these people does not involve face-to-face contact. However, that is not the type of relationship that exists aboard ship or at a station. There, you are face to face with the customer; there, the relationship becomes personal.

This personal interaction (action and reaction) requires face-to-face skills if it is to be effective. People who are the most successful in sales are normally the ones who can apply face-to-face skills. They LISTEN to customers so that they can better understand their needs; they SPEAK to the customers so that customers understand fully what they are saying. They make every effort to ensure customer satisfaction.

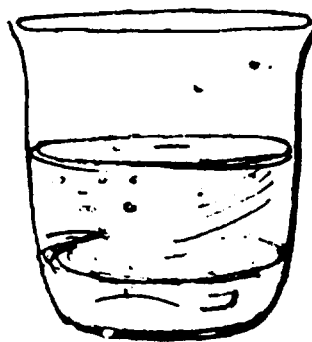
Your effectiveness at the contact point depends on how well you listen, speak, and respond to the customer's needs—how well you acquire and use face-to-face skills.

ATTITUDE

Attitude can be described as the tendency to move toward a situation or away from it. It results from either a positive or negative outlook or feeling toward a subject. It involves a like or dislike (based on a habit, a previously formed opinion, or a current snap judgment) for someone or something.

The following illustration, provided by a television spot concerning human behavior, is a good example of a positive-negative outlook:

Look at the glass below. Is it



**HALF
EMPTY
or
HALF
FULL
?**

Do you see the filled portion or the empty portion of the glass? Do you see “what is” and resolve to make the most of it, or do you see and resent “what is not”?

Attitudes can't be measured or graded, but the effect or results of our attitudes can be. "They are apparent in our actions and performance. You may have said or heard someone else say, "That person has a poor attitude." How was this opinion formed? Was it formed as the result of the way that person acted toward coworkers or customers or the way that person completed his or her work?

Let us look at some specific instances in which attitude plays a big part. Consider an aircraft mechanic in the process of making a preventive maintenance (PM) check on a jet engine. Suppose the mechanic sees a loose wire or a badly worn part not included on the PM card but does nothing about it. On a flight the next day, the engine malfunctions and flight operations are disrupted. Was the mechanic's neglect a dereliction of duty? Probably! However, we are not considering the legal aspects of the act, but the negative attitude that prompted it. Similarly, a negative attitude is demonstrated by the cook who scorches the eggs, the liberty boat coxswain who drives into every wave, or the Hospitalman (HM) who loses your shot record. The mechanic isn't going up in the plane. The cook has already eaten. The coxswain is in the duty section. The HM isn't going to have a sore arm as a result of the shots. These people aren't interested in doing a *good* job; they just want to get through the day.

People are said to have a positive attitude toward a situation or person when the consequences are pleasant or desirable. For example, you may be said to have a positive attitude toward a friend because you enjoy the friend's company.

You are said to exhibit a negative attitude toward an individual or situation when the consequences are painful or otherwise undesirable. For example, you drive carefully because of your concern for the safety of your passengers as well as the other drivers.

Why bother talking about attitudes? After all, people are people, and you can't change human nature. Not true! Human nature constantly changes—as attitudes change.

How do attitudes change? First, YOU must become aware of the desirability and advantage of change. Second, YOU have to change your attitude—no one can do it for you.

SN Doe is assigned to a galley working party by his leading petty officer (LPO). SN Doe is angry that he has been given this detail again. AN Frost is assigned to the same detail by his LPO. Both sailors show up for the

working party. Doe tells Frost that he is tired of working parties and he feels he shouldn't be there. He says he is going to request to see the captain to find out why he is assigned to so many working parties. Frost says, "Hey man, working parties don't last forever; besides the work we do helps everybody. It provides service to the galley so that the crew gets good hot chow, and we do not have to eat sea rations."

Pride

Since our attitude toward others is a reflection of our attitude toward ourselves, we must have a proper appreciation of ourselves.

We should not be too impressed with our accomplishments, nor should we be excessively critical of them. Staying in touch with reality is a excellent approach to developing a healthy attitude. You may not be all that you would like to be; but you are who you are, and you should feel good about that. You are valued as a person, you have accomplished certain things, and you have the ability to climb higher.

Recognizing who you are, what you are, and what you hope to become will enable you to meet each day with an expectation of winning rather than a certainty of defeat.

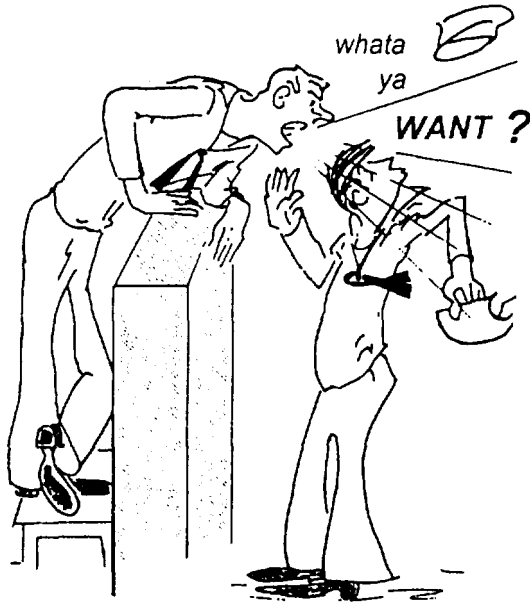
Without a degree of pride in yourself, your ability, and your job, you are unlikely to put forth your best effort. You are more likely to perform only when told to do so, and then only at a minimal acceptable performance level.

Courtesy

Regulations do not require courtesy beyond that required for formal military protocol. Formal courtesy is that which is demanded by custom and tradition, and failure to observe it can result in unpleasant consequences. But, common courtesy is a totally different subject.

Common courtesy goes beyond what we are required to do. It is a voluntary expression of respect for another's rights or feelings. It is opening a door for someone heavily laden with packages. It is showing military courtesy and respect for a person rather than merely giving the required recognition. It

is treating the customer as a person with a problem that is important.



Cooperation

You can probably “get by” if you do just what is required by the organization chart, a job description, or specific instructions, but cooperation smooths a lot of rough spots. Being cooperative is working **WITH** the other members of the team for the purpose of improving individual performance and overall efficiency.

Cooperation is necessary when “breaking in” a new member of your organization. Mary has just been assigned to your office, and it’s up to you to help her get started on a job that she has never done before. You could just show her how to perform the mechanics of the job and let her muddle through on her own. But wouldn’t explaining the job and telling her where to find answers to her questions make her job easier and her job performance better? Doing that also has a practical application—it can prevent many mistakes you may have to correct.

An element of cooperation is required when responding to customers’ needs. They will often need information or assistance from another office before you can act on their request. You can send them on a “wild goose chase” to get it; or you can provide them with specific instructions on what to get, where to get it, and how to get it. You might also make a phone call so that they will be expected.

Behavior

Our behavior (the things we choose to do or not to do) is the result of our attitude (our reasons for doing or not doing those things). Our behavior on the job is affected by our attitude toward our job, our coworkers, the customers, and the Navy. But another set of attitudes (not job related) also influences our performance on the job.

Let us try to provide an example to show how attitudes are developed. Walter T. Door rolls out of his bunk as reveille is sounded and heads for the shower in preparation for another day at sea. But, there is no hot water! With a few caustic comments about the “water king,” he proceeds to shave—in cold water. By now, his mutterings include the entire “A” gang. Splashing aftershave lotion on his scraped and burned face, he starts back to his locker only to stub his toe on the hatch. Grabbing his throbbing toe, Poor Walter drops his toilet kit. Any other time the contents of the kit would have only spilled, but this morning his new bottle of shaving lotion breaks. Walter’s fuse is getting shorter. As he dresses, he fumes at the missing shirt button and the fact that both socks are inside out. He shoves his feet into his shoes, very much aware of the injured toe, and decides not to tie his shoe laces. Now, he goes to breakfast. The menu lists a favorite, ham and eggs to order. But Walter is late, and the mess is now serving fried bologna and scrambled eggs. Walter finally gets to the office. What do you think his attitude will be when the division petty officer walks up and says, “Walter, we have an UNREP scheduled for 0930 today. According to the working party rotation list, you are next in line. The store-handling team will muster at 0915 on the fantail.”

Everyone has days like that one experienced by Walter. They are just a slice of what we call life experiences, and these occurrences can greatly influence on-the-job performance and attitude. However, you must strive not to let them negatively influence yours. It’s no easy task to overcome them, but overcome them you must if you are to respond to the customer and to your coworkers as you should. Though customers are not responsible for such events, they are often the victims of poor service because of them.

THIS MANUAL

“How to” books are available for almost any subject—how to build a house, how to build a plane, how to build a boat, how to repair your car, and even a how to diet and live with it. These books are written for

those who have an interest in those things, but lack the “know how” to do them.

In a way, this manual is also a “how to” book but it does have a slightly different approach. To begin with, you already possess the “know how”—everyone really knows how to be courteous and helpful. When we don’t do what we should, either we don’t care or just didn’t stop to think how our actions might affect the other person. The intent of this manual is to impress upon you the importance of caring and the effect of your actions and attitude toward others.

This manual first identifies undesirable personal traits of members that can make the Navy less than it can be. It asks you to evaluate yourself so that you can become aware of areas needing improvement. Then, by showing the advantages of improvement to you and to the Navy, it dares you to accept the challenge of self-improvement.

We in the Navy have a real need to improve our human relations. Human relations often are the deciding factor as to whether a member likes the Navy or dislikes it.

EXAMPLES WITHIN

Chapter 2 is a series of case studies, or examples, of the type of service that is often encountered in the Navy. Some of these examples are limited to specific ratings, others are not. Some portray good service, others poor.

The purpose of these examples is to help you evaluate your own attitudes and abilities. To say that something is “better” really doesn’t say much unless you go a step further by adding “than _____.” That is evaluation, and evaluation can be simply described as the weighing of all known factors to determine a best course of action. In team sports, each team is constantly evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the other so that it can plan its strategy.

Self-evaluation requires that you weigh your own strengths and weaknesses—not an easy task. It’s much easier to evaluate someone else’s strengths and weaknesses because you are less likely to be distracted by excuses and rationalization. The performances described in the examples will help somewhat in this respect since you can examine, and then compare, your performance with those described.

REFERENCES TO EXAMPLES WITHIN

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the needs of Navy members and, by referring to the examples in chapter 2, identify the attitudes and skills necessary to meet those needs,

Chapter 3 gives examples on the basis of the individual—you. What attitudes and what skills do you need? Why? How can you improve them? Why should you even try?

Chapter 4 examines the team—all the people who work at the contact point. It points out your responsibilities to the team and the team’s responsibilities to you. It demonstrates how team members can assist each other in providing improved service.

ATTITUDE TOWARD

We have discussed the importance of a good attitude as it relates to doing a job well. Attitude is also important as you read this manual. As you read, ask yourself, What does this example say to ME? Do I exhibit any of these undesirable traits? If so, what difference would it make if I didn’t? If you take this attitude, you are likely to find some areas in which you can improve simply by being aware of the need for improvement. However, if you read it with a closed mind—that is, with the attitude that everyone is out of step but you—your efforts will have been futile.

